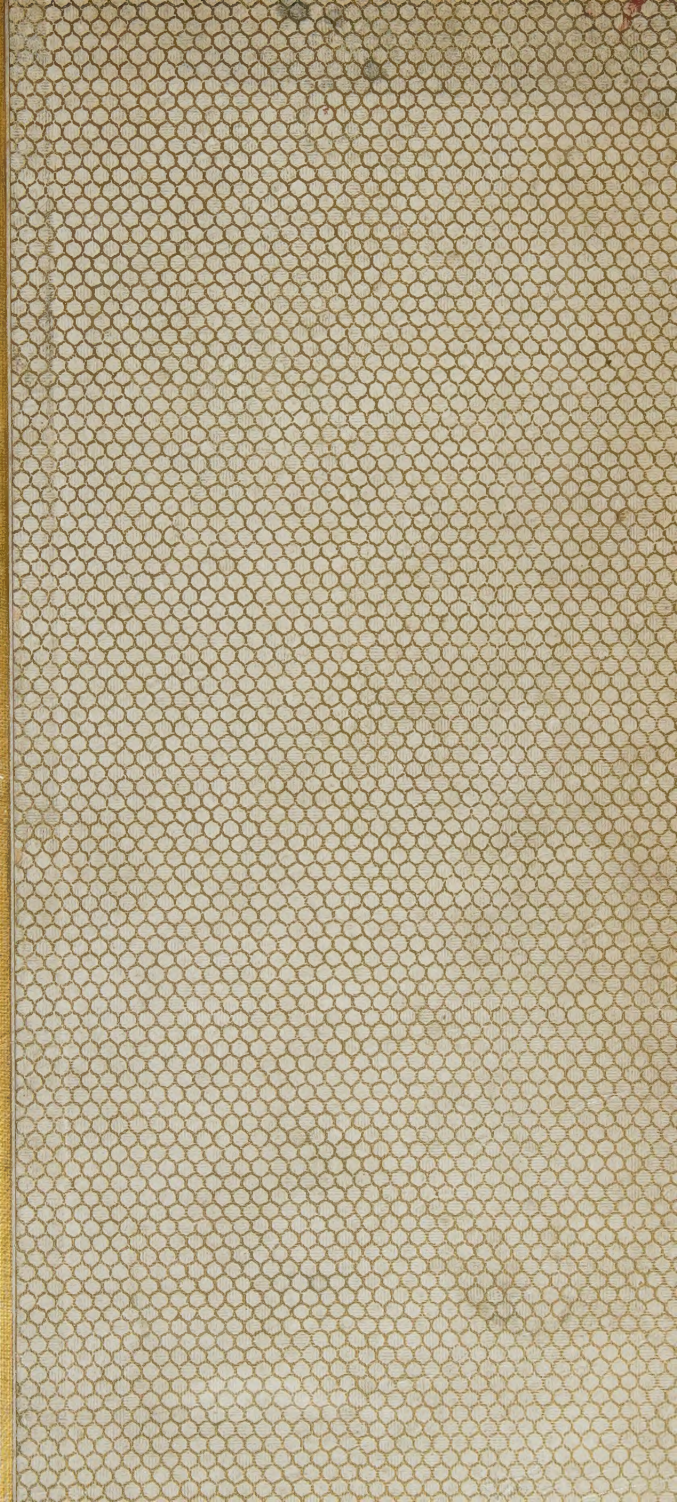




Den
A Story
for Boys




Book

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DAN

A STORY FOR BOYS



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DAN

A STORY FOR BOYS

BY

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ILLUSTRATED BY

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NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY
31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

1893

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BY E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY

PRESS OF
Rockwell and Churchill
BOSTON

PREFACE.

WHEN certain little friends come coaxingly and cry, “Oh, *please* write a story for *us boys*, Mrs. Brine!” what else can be done but to comply with the demand, and do the best one can in that line?

Now, here is a story of a boy who was every inch a boy, and I introduce him to my little friends with the hope that they will like him as much as I do, and — that will be saying a great deal for “Dan.”

M. D. B.

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D A N.

ONE day last spring, just at that season of the sweet, spring-time when everything seems loveliest and most welcome in the landscape around us, and when a certain little New England village was looking its very best in new, clean foliage, and rejoicing in the beautiful blue of its own especial part of the skies above, and the golden warmth and brightness of its own especial sunshine, a pretty young lady looked out of her window and said to herself:

“Oh, what a lovely day for sketching that charming bit of roadside over there! I’ll do it at once.”

So she caught up her shade hat, her color-box and paper, and, with her little camp-stool in the other hand, started out merrily enough for a pleas-

ant morning's work. Stretching for quite a distance along the road was a soft, green bank shaded by grand old trees through which the sunbeams flickered and fell softly. Under one of these trees the young lady seated herself and arranged her easel. Such a pretty, peaceful scene before her! It filled her heart with sweet content, and she hummed a happy little song to herself while her fingers were working busily with the brushes. It didn't seem as if anything discordant and disagreeable *could* happen to spoil the pleasure of that fair, bright morning.

But, oh dear! how mistaken she was! Presently a bunch of boys appeared, lounging along together with no especial object in view save the killing of time.

Now the *killing of time* is a most unprofitable employment, my dear little folks, for you know — or, at least, *grown* people do — that time flies away and beyond our reach fast enough, no matter how well we treat it, and there isn't a bit too much of it in this beautiful world. It comes and passes rapidly, *dragging little people along with it, and

hurrying them into the time of young womanhood, young manhood, and at last, before we know it, into *old age*. I think the wise thing to do is to fill every minute which time allows us for opportunities, with kind words, and deeds, and thoughts, and efforts, and we will find them much pleasanter travelling companions in our flight with Father Time than if we have to go side by side with a bad conscience, and neglected opportunities, and naughtinesses which can never be undone, or kept back from their travel towards eternity. (Please excuse this long digression and little sermon. I won't do it again.)

Well, the boys came lounging along, as I have said, ready for any kind of mischief which would seem to them to deserve the name of *fun*. Just before they reached the spot where our young artist was sitting so quietly and so peacefully, there was some dispute about a ball, and their loud, angry voices reached her ears disturbingly.

She looked around at the boys with a shade of reproach in her glance, and hoped they would

pass by and be gone with another moment. Again she was mistaken, for a new way of "killing time" suggested itself to one of the rude fellows. His name was Bill, and, being the tallest of the group, and the very worst as well, he was a sort of leader in all they desired to do.

"Say, fellers, let's shy this at her an' make her hop!" was Bill's suggestion, as he glanced towards the young girl and winked his eye.

An eager nod was the reply, and — plump into the girl's color-box fell the ball, while she "*hopped*" to the entire satisfaction of the boys, and cried out in dismay.

Their rude shouts convinced her that the aim had been quite intentional, and there was a spice of anger in the motion of her arm as she threw the ball far over a fence into a field of high grass.

The boys drew near, and crowded around to criticise the sketch, and signed to each other to "pay her off" for flinging their ball away.

They jostled her arm, and pressed against her



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camp-stool and easel, and annoyed her until human nature could tolerate no more of it, and, rising from her seat, she sternly ordered the boys away.

"Got as much right to this yer tree's *you've* got!" exclaimed Bill. "Ain't we, fellers?"

"All the same, you will have to leave," was the quiet reply, "or I shall take means to compel you to do so."

"Oh, ho! who's 'feard o' *you!* *You* can't handle us nohow!"

"Maybe not," she answered; "but I think I know who *can*, if I choose to call for help, and I advise you, my lads, to save yourselves some trouble while you may."

She glanced across the way as she spoke, and the boys followed her eyes.

"Come on, fellers," whispered Bill, beginning to move away; "it's Fred, the gardener over there, an' he licked me like sixty one day. Come 'long!"

They were in no mood for delay, having more or less experience with the might of Fred's hands; so presently our young lady was alone again, and

resumed her painting with a triumphant smile about her pretty lips.

But, after all, the boys did not go far. They seated themselves under the next tree, a short distance away only, and waited for a chance for more and safer mischief.

Their coarse jests and voices reached the artist's ears, but she ignored them, and soon became quite absorbed in her work.

"Hey, Bill! see, there's Dan a-comin'."

Bill stopped throwing stones at the birds, and turned his bold eyes towards the bend in the road beyond where the young lady sat sketching.

"Good! let's ketch him, an' have some fun, *I* say!"

"All right; an' fun it'll be, won't it, eh, fellers?"

The voices roused the girl from her revery amongst the colors on her block of paper, and she raised her eyes to see if "Dan" were dog, cat, or horse, pitying either animal should it fall into the hands of those terrible boys. But her pity grew deeper and turned into solicitude when she beheld a little

fellow of about ten years of age coming towards her, and dragging a small cart which contained a bundle of something white. As he drew nearer, she saw that he had a round, good-natured face, from which glowed a pair of beautiful dark eyes, shaded by long, black lashes. From under his hat-brim a mass of tangled black hair seemed to be struggling for freedom, and clustered about on his forehead very prettily. His complexion was dark and smooth, his features regular, and he held his head straight up in the air in a manly sort of way that impressed her favorably, and made her jump at the conclusion that "Dan" was no mean-spirited lad, nor a bad one either, such as they who were waiting for him farther down the road.

He came along whistling merrily, and meeting her gaze as he passed, returned her smile, though rather shyly, and went on to the fate in store for him.

"Poor little chap! I do hope he will have the spirit to give those boys as good as he gets, and stand up for his rights, if they try to tease him," she thought, turning again to her work.

"Hello, Injun!" shouted Bill, suddenly pouncing down upon Dan.

"Hello, yourself," retorted Dan, pleasantly, though not without an inward dread of Bill's nearer approach.

"Ye're lookin' kind of down in the mouth, Dan," continued Bill, as he winked to his mates. "Here, fellers, Dan wants to be cheered up, let's do it for him; it'll be a real kindness now, won't it?"

"He looks like he ain't smiled in a year," added another boy, as he jumped down the bank to assist Bill, who was hauling poor little Dan off from the road.

Dan's struggles were all in vain, and the "cheering up" was begun in short order. Dan was held down by one or two of his tormentors, while the others pulled off his old shoes and tickled his little bare feet; and the more he squirmed and laughed nervously, the more they shouted and enjoyed the fun.

The noise increased, and presently the young lady, whose back had been turned all this time, and who



"COME, CHEER, DAN." — *Page 20.*

at first had not heeded the affairs about her, was startled by a scream from Dan which held more of pain than of laughter, and so she started up quickly to find out what it was all about.

Running hastily along the bank, she seized Bill by the arm and pushed him down the slope, where he rolled over into the dust of the road. To another boy she administered a rousing box on the ear, and sent him headlong after Bill.

By that time the other scamps, realizing that trouble was after them, flew, like the cowards they were, beyond the reach of those dainty white hands, and Dan scrambled to his feet, covered with dust and crying with rage and pain.

He picked up his wagon, which had been overturned in the road below, and replaced the white bundle, — now not so white as it had been before, — and then stammered out his thanks to the young lady who had rescued him.

“Where are you going, my little man?” she asked.

“To carry home Mis’ Howe’s washin’, ma’am,”

he replied, drawing the sleeve of his shirt across his brown eyes to clear away the tears.

"In any hurry?" questioned the girl.

"Not partickler, ma'am, 'cause I started good 'n' early, so's to take it kind of easy."

"It hasn't been so very *easy*, has it, poor child?" said the girl, smiling. "Well, if you're in no hurry, come and talk to me a little while I am painting."

Dan followed her to the tree where her easel was waiting for her in the restful shade of green and gold, and seated himself on the grass beside her, looking with great interest at her work, and speedily forgetting his recent sufferings.

"Now, there, what's your name, my boy?"

"Dan."

"Dan what? what's your real name—your whole name?"

"Seems's if I didn't have any *whole* name, 'cause I never goes by any 'cept jus' *Dan*," he replied; "but I'm Daniel Carmen, I am, an' mammy *she* knows it."

"I heard one of those wretched boys call you an Indian; why did he?"

"'Cause dad was part Injun, an' mammy says his skin was dark like mine is, an' so I s'pose I'm Injun too."

"Is your mother part Indian?"

"No; mammy's got Scotch in her, she says, an' she's only brown 'cause she's tanned with the sun an' wind, you see. I never saw dad much; all I know of him is what mammy tells me, and when I was little — oh, a good deal littler than I am now — he got killed on a railroad track, an' my mammy an' me, we ain't been livin' very comf'table since, 'cause we got turned out of our house, an' mammy was poor an' 'most sick, an' we fin'ly came here an' got a teeny little house, an' she washes an' does cleanin' for folks, an' I totes the washin' about, an' I help her all I can, 'cause I've only got her, an' she's only got jus' me, an' we love each other very much indeed."

"Bravo, Dan!" cried the girl, clapping her hands.
"You've made quite a speech, and given me a

great deal of information too. Well, *I* think it is a shame that bad boys should tease you so, when you are trying to be a little man, and help your mother. Do they always tease you so?"

Dan sighed. "That Bill, the biggest feller, *he's* all the time a-layin' for me. He leads the other fellers on, an' they think I'm only a *Injun*, so they can plague me all they like, 'cause I ain't got any big brother to pay 'em for it. But *sometimes* I get a chance to hit 'em back, an' I do it, too, though mammy's always tellin' me it's better to be patient, an' try not to do wrong by fightin' 'cause *they* do."

The young lady laughed.

"I wouldn't mind a little teasing, Dan, if I were you, but when it comes to cruelty and deliberate hurting, why, then I think you might rightly stand up for your rights. I hate to see anybody hurt and teased, and the boys shan't tease you when *I* am around."

Dan's big brown eyes regarded the girl curiously. Nobody had ever shown so much interest in him

before, save the hard-working mother, who was all he had to love in the wide world. He thought this new friend who was talking to him so kindly was a *beautiful* lady, and he wished he dared tell her so. Presently he asked, shyly:

“What’s your name, ma’am?”

“My name is Viola Carew,” was the smiling reply, “and you may call me Miss Carew, or Miss Viola, either you please.”

Dan gave the matter serious thought for a moment, then he said, “I think I’ll call you Miss Vi’la sometimes, an’ Miss C’rew other times, for a change, you see. I like ’em both very much. They’re lots prettier names than only ‘*Dan*.’”

Viola laughed, and patted the curly head at her side. Then there was a few moments of silence, during which Dan was poking a small beetle with a piece of twig, and turning it over on its back, greatly against its inclinations.

Presently a gentle voice broke the silence.

“Dan, little boy, what were the boys doing to you a little while ago, do you remember?”

The child stopped playing with the miserable little bug, and looked up in surprise.

He thought the young lady must be joking, surely; but no, her face was quite too serious for that, so he replied:

"Why, you ain't forgettin', are you, miss, how they teased an' hurt me? 'cause if *you* forget, *I* don't, I tell you!"

"That's just it, Dan," said Miss Viola. "I knew you wouldn't forget how they made you suffer. I was only wondering if you enjoyed teasing that poor bug as Bill enjoyed teasing *you*. I wonder if the bug will forget it, or *remember* how a little boy named Dan Carmen teased and hurt it one fine day when it was peacefully walking along and minding its own little affairs, without a thought of troubling anybody."

Dan's beautiful eyes opened widely, and the bug, taking wise advantage of a pause in the movements of the twig, crawled away rapidly, and hid under the largest leaf it could find, while the boy exclaimed:

"*Bugs* don't feel things, do they, ma'am? Doesn't seem's if they minded about things. Only *jus' bugs*, you know."

"Why shouldn't they feel pain as much as you and I, Dan? They're only bugs, to be sure, but in proportion to their size they can feel and suffer just as we do. And yet the poor things can't defend themselves, if great giants, like boys and girls, come along and worry them with sticks and stones, and call it fun, as Bill did when he made a helpless little bug out of *you*, Dan, my boy."

Dan looked soberly at his little twig, and then threw it far away. "I didn't mean to hurt the bug. I didn't know it hurt 'em, you see, ma'am. Lots of folks does it, and sometimes I've ketched butterflies an' tied a hair round their wings to see 'em try to fly. Did *that* hurt 'em, do you s'pose?"

Viola looked graver than ever.

"Oh, Dan, Dan!" she cried, shaking her head; then, as a thought came quickly, she added, "Come here a minute, close to me;" and as he stood at

her side, she rapidly threw about his arms a thick, long veil which had been about her shoulders. Very closely she drew the little arms till they were pinioned tightly at the boy's side, and he stood a helpless captive almost before he had realized her intention.

"There now," she laughingly said, "fly away, little butterfly; stretch your wings, and fly away!"

Dan began to laugh, too, as he tried to wriggle his arms free from the veil and its meshes.

"I shan't poke any more bugs!" he exclaimed, "an' I won't tie any more butterflies. I didn't think it would make 'em feel so bad, you see; but I know *now*, fast 'nough."

Then, when he was released, and sitting beside her again, Viola explained to him the wrong that lies in all kinds of teasing. "It isn't that boys *mean* to be cruel," she said, "but it seems like fun, and they do not realize that the dear Lord made the dumb brutes and insects with as much loving care for *their* comfort as He feels for us, who, of course, are still dearer in His sight, because

we have souls, and can one day go and live with Him. And *because* we are so strong, and wise, and can take care of ourselves so well, you know, God means that we shall also take care of His dumb creatures, and be kind to them, and make them happy. Don't you see, Dan, that my advice to you is wise?"

Dan nodded Yes, and Viola went on:

"There is another thing you should remember, too, Dan, my boy, and that is—God will sooner or later *punish* cruel people. He always makes them suffer in one way or another for the sufferings they cause, because He has expressly told us in the Bible that we *must* be kind to one another."

Dan looked up eagerly.

"Do you s'pose, ma'am, that He'll punish Bill an' his mean lot for teasin' me, if I am only 'Dan,' an' the 'little Injun' they think ain't any good; *do* you think He'll punish *them*, Miss Vi'la?"

"They'll come to grief some day, no doubt, Dan, if they don't leave off their bad ways. But, now, I have kept you too long from your errand, and you

must pick up your cart and hurry on with the wash for Mrs. Howe."

"Could you tell me the time, please, ma'am?" asked the boy, in no haste to leave the pretty young girl who seemed so kind, and who was fast winning his lonely young heart.

Viola looked at the tiny watch which hung from her side. Dan thought it the most beautiful thing he had ever seen, and wondered if his mammy would one day have a watch to hang at *her* side, and dangle with a lot of little fancy things which looked like tiny toys. She should surely have them all if he could hurry and grow a man and make money for her.

"It is just eleven o'clock," said Viola; "are you very late?"

The boy settled contentedly back on the grass. "Oh, no, ma'am!" he answered. "Mammy told me if I got back by twelve, I'd be time enough, an' I can tote these things to Mis' Howe's in a jiffy, you see; she lives near here. So I can stay a bit longer, if you're willin', Miss Vi'la."

Miss Viola did not mind having Dan's company as long as he could rightly stay with her, so the boy kept his curled-up position on the grass at her feet, and she began questioning again.

"How about school. Dan?"

"I don't go to school any more," he said, while a flush rose to his cheeks. "I went to the Hill school over yonder once, but the fellers they nagged me all the time an' called me names, an' I got so mad I foughted 'em hard, an' hit 'em enough to hurt sometimes, too, if I *am* a little feller. But the teacher she always said I was the one what was the mostest to blame, an' licked *me* more'n she licked the other boys, an' mammy said 'twasn't fair, an' so — an' so I didn't go any more."

"But surely, Dan, you're not going to be content to grow up an ignorant sort of man, are you?"

"Does *nigerant* mean stupid, miss?"

"Yes; *quite* stupid, little boy," was the smiling reply; "and I don't think you look at all like that kind of a boy."

Dan lifted his head proudly. "I ain't goin' to

be nigerant then. My mammy *she* can read an' write, an' she spells me a little every day, an' I can write on my slate words as long as—oh, as long as *Washin'ton*."

Viola laughed again.

"That's good, Dan, for a beginning; and how about arithmetic?"

"Well, I can *add* a little, an' mammy she makes me keep on trying sums like when I was at school. She says I'm big enough to be in *surtrackshun* now."

"*Subtraction*, Dan," corrected Viola, drawing a little paper from her pocket. "Come, now, we'll have a little lesson just now, all by ourselves. See, here are four chocolates left from some I had a while ago. Now, if I tell you to eat two of them, how many will be left in the paper?"

"Two!" cried Dan, feeling very clever.

"And if I eat the other two, then what?"

"The *paper*, miss!" yelled Dan, his brown eyes full of twinkles.

"And if I take away the paper?" laughed Viola, drawing it out of sight.

"Only jus' a reckerleckshun of somethin' good," replied Dan, shrugging his shoulders, and feeling his mouth water for those chocolates.

"Oh, you're a funny fellow!" cried the young lady; "here, now, eat the four chocolates, and then go and do your errand, and when you go home tell mammy you're going to be a very clever man some fine day."

Dan looked delighted. "Ho! I thought you was goin' to give me a harder 'rithmetic lesson than that. I *like chocolate* 'rithmetic first-rate."

Miss Viola gathered her materials together and started for the house, but paused a moment to say to Dan, who was reluctantly lifting the handle of his little cart:

"See here, my boy, I live right over there, in that white house, see? Well, if I should want you to do an errand for me some day, or for somebody in the house at any time, could you be trusted to do it faithfully, and like a man of honor? If I am going to help you earn money for your mother, you must let me trust you, Dan, and feel sure that you

will always *do your best* about whatever you are called upon to do for another."

"You may jus' trust Dan Carmen to try an' please *you*, ma'am," replied the boy, gratefully.

"Oh, but that isn't the question, dear. You must try to do right for right's sake, and not only to please somebody you like, you know."

Dan looked serious. "'Tain't always easy to want to please *some* folks, ma'am. There's folks in this village I jus' most hate, —mammy won't let me hate 'em as much as I want to, 'cause it's wicked to hate, she says, but I — I'm as near it as anythin' can be, Miss Vi'la, an' if I did errands for 'em, they'd likely cheat me out of fair pay, an' call me names, too."

"Oh, dear me!" said Viola; "you poor little fellow, I'll try to help you to a better opinion of your neighbors as time goes on."

"Well, a feller that gets snubbed and kicked about like I do, can't help thinkin' queer things, you see," said Dan; and looking at Miss Viola half quizzically and half seriously, he asked, "Were you

— I don't s'pose, now, you were ever knocked down, Miss Vi'la?"

The young lady laughed so merrily at this that a little lad came to the door of the house opposite and looked out curiously.

"I can't say, Dan, that I have ever had such an experience," replied Viola.

"Well, then, miss, you can't come anywhere near knowin' how it riles a feller, an' makes him bad, even if he wasn't settin' out to be so at first."

Just then a piping little voice called:

"Hello, Miss Vi, what you laughing at?"

Viola turn in the direction of the little figure at the door and replied:

"Oh, Bennie, did you hear me, you rogue? Come here a moment, I want you."

A boy of about eight years ran down the piazza steps, and as far as the gate, which he climbed, and, boy-like, sat swinging back and forth. As he swung he sang gayly:

"Oh, if I were President of these United States,

I'd eat molasses candy, and I'd swing upon the gates."

"And a very foolish kind of President you'd make, my lad, I'm sure," laughed Viola. "Come here to me, I want you; that's a good boy."

Dan meanwhile stared at the new-comer with much interest. He saw a handsome little boy whose golden hair fell down below his shoulders, and who was dressed in a white flannel suit, the prettiest, Dan thought, that he had ever seen. The loose waist had a broad collar trimmed with blue braid. Around the waist was a broad blue sash with fringed ends. The little knickerbocker legs were clad in black silk stockings, and the soft blue silken fringe at the ends of the sash hung below the knees and dangled against those restless legs continually. Dan wondered if ever he would be able to wear such a wonderful suit of clothes.

While Bennie was considering whether or no to go over to Miss Viola, and while the latter was still beckoning to him, Dan said in a whisper:

"He's new 'round here, ain't he? I ain't seen his kind in the village only once in a great while, an' then they never stayed long enough for me to see 'em more'n once."

"He is little Bennie Moore, and he and his mother are boarding where I board. They came only a few days ago, but Bennie and I are great friends."

Just then Bennie came sauntering along, his hands in his pockets, and a shy expression on his face, for he was in reality a shy little lad, not over-fond of meeting strangers, for all his independent little manners.

Viola drew him beside her.

"This is Dan," she said. "Dan Carmen, a little boy who is going to be great friends with me, Bennie, and whom I like very much. Dan, this is Bennie Moore, another little friend of mine, and I'm going to be very proud of you both."

Dan grinned and bobbed his head to Bennie, and Bennie looked sideways at Dan, and *didn't* grin.

"Why, Bennie," exclaimed Viola, "I was sure *you'd* like Dan as much as I do, and I hoped Dan would like you too."

Bennie looked embarrassed.

"Well, he didn't say 'How do do?' and so *I* didn't either."

Dan's face brightened.

"Oh, I was goin' to say it, but you looked so kind of fine, I was 'fraid you'd snub a feller that looks like *me*."

Master Bennie's shyness vanished (maybe the compliment to his appearance was the cause), and he held out a little hand to Dan.

"If Miss Vi likes you," he said, "*I'm* going to, too, 'cause she always likes nice people. I'm glad you like my clothes. I s'pose if *my* mother was *your* mother, and *your* mother was *my* mother, then you'd be Ben, and I'd be Dan, and you'd be wearing nice clothes, and I'd be wearing your kind, you see."

"Bravo, Bennie! you're a philosopher, my little man, as well as a dear boy. Now, you must be kind to Dan, and not let the other boys tease him, and he will be good to you when he has a chance, won't you, Dan?"

"You may jus' guess I will, ma'am," was the emphatic reply.

"Ain't your friends good to you?" asked Bennie, in surprise.

Dan's face darkened.

"I ain't got a friend in the world 'cept only mammy, an'" — he drew close to Viola's side and laid his hand with an affectionate gesture on her arm — "this dear kind lady who only knew me jus' this mornin'."

Bennie's eyes widened.

"Oh, my! what a lonesome boy you must be!"

"Well, sometimes I am, an' sometimes I ain't. I don't like the fellers round here anyway, an' they lie an' cheat an' put all the blame on me, an' I get licked by whoever ketches me, an' the biggest boy of 'em all, that's Bill, *he* licks me every time he sees me goin' by. Anyhow, *I* don't care! I don't lie an' cheat; I'd be *'shamed to lie myself out of a scrape*, so I would."

Bennie glanced around and saw that Miss Viola was busy gathering daisies at the roadside, so he whispered to Dan:

"Why don't you fight those fellers? *I* would, only when a big fellow comes at me I get 'fraid, and run away. But I'm littler'n you, you know."

"I'm ten," replied Dan. "How old are you?"

"Eight, going on nine," Bennie said, stretching his pretty little figure as high as possible. "After nine *I'll* be ten, too. Then I'll pay off any boy that tries to — to bother *me*, I will."

"Well," said Dan, "I s'pose I *can* fight. I feel it inside of me often, an' sometimes the fight gets out 'fore I can stop it. But, you see, I hold it in as long as I can, 'cause mammy, she's always a tellin' me it's wrong to fight, an' makes me as bad as the other feller; an' anyway, I always feel better in my heart when I've held the fight back, and the boys have gone, an' I've only got *their* part to be sorry for, an' not my own, for then *mammy*'d have to be sorry too, you see."

"You are right, Dan," cried Viola, coming up in time to hear the boy's speech, and winking a tear or two from her eyes as she spoke. "You are right, and you are a dear boy in the bargain. Your mother must be a good woman. Tell her I'm coming to see her some day, and you and she and I will be good friends, won't we? Good-by

now. I must really go home, and you must not be hindered any longer."

"Good-by, Dan!" called Bennie, following Miss Viola. "You've got *three* friends now,—your mother, Miss Vi, and me,—you know."

Dan's heart jumped way up into his throat. To think that pretty boy should be his friend! Why, he looked—Bennie did—like pictures of kings' sons he had seen in papers now and then, and such a nice boy, too! Oh, Dan was very happy that morning as he trudged along the road, though he did keep his brown eyes roving here and there lest Bill and his crew should pounce out upon him.

Meanwhile Miss Viola told Bennie all about Dan, and the talk she had had with him under the trees, and that she was going to keep an eye upon him, and help him in every way she could, because he had an honest, true little heart; and no matter how poor and shabby he was, owing to circumstances he couldn't help, he was worth as much kindness and assistance in his little plans as though he were the richest boy in the village.

Bennie was learning some new lessons of kindness of heart and other truths as he talked with her about Dan, and made up his little mind to stand by Dan Carmen through thick and thin. Later in the day Viola questioned the lady of the house about Dan and his mother, and learned that little was known of them except that they had come to the village the year before, and while Mrs. Carmen took in washing (when she could get it), and did, in fact, all sorts of work for whoever called on her for house-cleaning or the like, Dan roved hither and thither in search of odd jobs of any kind, sometimes getting the chance to earn a few pennies, and oftener getting into some scrape which he had to get out of the best way he could. That the woman was a good laundress had been proven at times, and that she was fond of her son, and he of her, no one doubted or cared. But whether they were strictly honest or not, people hadn't fairly decided; and because of the Indian blood in the boy, it was frequently considered that he was to blame for sundry annoyances committed in the village, etc., etc.

All of this only made Viola more determined to help Dan, for she felt that she knew more about him, after all, than the people who were at home the year round in the pretty little village. She felt quite convinced that Dan was more sinned against than sinning, and there was a look in his eyes which to her appeared brave, honest, and true, however other people might decide. So, poor little Dan and the poor, hard-working mother were put upon her list of people she cared to like and befriend, and I am sure all my young readers will be glad to know that.

The mother of Master Ben was a little cautious, to be sure, about her son's acquaintance with the "scapegoat" of the village, and was not quite willing to adopt Miss Viola's opinion of Dan.

"You know, Bennie," said she privately to him on the evening of the day when our story begins, — "you know you don't want to be intimate with the boy that is considered an outcast in the village, do you? And there are so many nice, little *good* boys about who are more of your kind, you see, for you to play with."

Bennie tossed his golden head till his sunny hair flew all over his merry, rosy face.

"O mamma, don't you scare a bit!" he said, consolingly. "I ain't *going* to 'sociate with a bad boy. *Dan* isn't the leastest bit bad, and if Miss Vi likes him, I guess you other ladies needn't fret 'bout him. I like him 'cause he's good in his face, and *I* don't care 'bout his clothes. I don't want to be a girl-boy, you see, and I shouldn't wonder but I'm getting so lately," a little anxiously, and with a glance in the mirror at his long hair, which, notwithstanding many an earnest request on his part, the fond, proud mamma could not find courage to have shorn from the fine-shaped head of her one little boy and only child.

"Won't you cut it off pretty soon, mamma?"

"Oh, dear, maybe next year, darling," sighed the mother; and with that promise Bennie tried to be content, and jumped into bed thinking of Dan and, like Miss Viola, growing more interested with each thought of the poor little "half-breed" village boy.

The next afternoon, while Viola was returning from the post-office, a familiar boyish voice cried out, "How do, ma'am?"

Turning, she saw Dan in the doorway of a store regarding her with a beaming face and smile.

"Why, good-afternoon, Dan; how are you to-day?"

"Pretty well—I mean first-rate, ma'am," replied Dan. "I'm gettin' mammy's soap, an' may I jus' go a little way 'long with you, please, Miss Vi'la, I ain't seen you for so long time?" Taking his package from the clerk he ran down the steps and was soon beside the young lady, who was really glad to see him, though Dan's "long time" had only counted up the hours between the previous morning and this early afternoon. All the same, the compliment was appreciated by Miss Viola, and together they walked along the street.

"What have you to do for your mother this afternoon, Dan?" she asked, a sudden thought prompting the question.

"Nothin', Miss Vi'la, 'cept try to get a job to

earn some pennies for mammy's box, where she keeps her money. Seems's if I can't do anythin' to help my mammy, an' I do try so hard. Why, jus' now I asked a lady up the road to let me pull weeds out her gardin, an' — an' she jus' only said to clear off or she'd make me."

"And what did you do, then?"

"Well — I cleared off; there wasn't any money in it, though; if there *was* money in 'clearin' out,' I'd be rich, Miss Vi'la, in a hurry, I tell you." The boy laughed as he spoke, but his eyes were troubled in spite of the laugh, and Viola made haste to bring a happier expression there.

"Dan, do you know what 'posing' means? For instance, did you ever hear of any one's posing for a picture?"

Dan scratched his curly head and looked puzzled. "I don't *know* the word, ma'am, but I 'spose it's doin' something 'bout the picture, ain't it?"

"Yes; in fact, it's next thing to being the picture. Well, to *pose* means to sit or stand in some desired position, while you and the position are being

put — painted — on canvas or paper. You saw me painting yesterday morning, but I was only making a picture of the landscape about. Now, I want to paint *you*, my boy, and if you'll meet me at that big tree in the field over there, to-morrow morning, I will show you how to pose for me, and I will pay you fifty cents for doing so. Would you like to try?"

Dan's mouth and eyes seemed trying to see which could open the wider. He stood stock-still in the road and gave a long, low whistle presently, which betrayed his astonishment and delight, and told Viola more than a volley of words could have done.

Finally, "Do you mean it? do you *mean* it, Miss Vi'la? Oh! won't I, though! *won't* I!"

He caught the young lady's hand and put his soft lips upon the back of it impulsively, then wiping a tear from his brown, glad eyes, he cried exultingly:

"Oh, fifty cents for mammy's box! How glad she'll be, an' — why, I never s'posed I'd earn so much at one job in my life! Oh, how *good* you are to me, you dear, kind Miss Vi'la!"

"Well, be there at ten o'clock; and you will have to keep perfectly still, you know, Dan, no moving about while I am painting until I say 'Rest; do you quite understand?'"

"It'll be kind of hard work keepin' still, but I'll do anythin' for you an' — for my darlin' mammy!" was the reply, as the boy bounded off in haste to tell his mother of his good fortune.

As Dan hurried along the road, whistling merrily, and feeling so happy it seemed as if his heart wasn't big enough to hold it all, a little gray squirrel skipped across his path and ran to the top of a stone wall just ahead. True to a boy's instinct, Dan picked up a stone and raised his sturdy little right arm. It wasn't from any desire to be cruel, nor indeed was there any plan or thought about the act; nothing but that impulse which springs into the brain of boys generally — restless, healthy little fellows who never can keep their impulses under control somehow, and yet are tender-hearted enough never to *mean* to hurt any one or any thing — caused our Dan to take aim at that squirrel with that stone in

his hand. So, another minute and it would have sped on its mission, the cruel little stone (and Dan's aim was usually a sure one), but for a sudden thought which caused the arm to drop at the boy's side and the stone to fall back amongst its roadside companions.

"Oh, now, Dan Carmen, think what you were going to do! And *she* said it was wicked to hurt dumb things, an' bugs and things, an' birds too, an' I know she would have said squirrels if she'd only thought of 'em. I'd be 'shamed to look her in the face if I'd throwed that stone, an' after I'd promised her, too, an' she said I was a '*dear boy*.' Oh, I love her most to pieces, I do, an' I wouldn't be bad for anythin'!"

(See, dear boys and girls to whom I am telling this story, how the little seeds of kindness which pretty Miss Viola planted, almost without knowing it, in Dan's heart that morning under the trees, were beginning to take root. Don't you think Dan was *worth* liking and trusting?)

Well, at the appointed time the next morning the

small boy and the tall young lady were both on hand together beneath the large elm-tree in the quiet field all full of sunshine and sweetness.

Miss Viola looked expectant and happy ; Dan, on the contrary, seemed quite downcast.

Being questioned, it turned out that he had wanted to wear his "Sunday clothes" (a trifle better than his every-day suit), but "mammy wouldn't let him, 'cause she thought the lady would like the old ones better, an' now he'd have to be painted as a—a shabby boy, an' wouldn't it make a dreadful shabby picture?"

Viola laughed a great deal at Dan's rueful face and speech. She explained that the picture would be much prettier—"more picturesque" she called it—than if he were "dressed up" in his better suit, and that she wanted the subject of her work to represent a country boy in a field, looking as if he had been working and had stopped for an idle moment. If Dan was shabby, he was not at all stupid, and quickly caught her ideas.

"Well, I'll kind of lean against this tree an' look

real lazy, jus' as if I wasn't *workin' for fifty cents*," he said with sly humor. "Nobody'd know I *was* doin' anythin' like earning money, would they?"

So he leaned back against the sturdy old tree-trunk, with his hands in his pockets and his hat pushed back from his curly head and his little feet crossed easily, and Viola went to work in short order.

For a time there was silence, except for the rustling of the leaves around them and above in the branches of the grand old elm, and the soft twittering of the birds which flew hither and thither in the sunlight. Finally Dan spoke.

"Fifty cents'll make a big pile of pennies, won't it? I guess mammy'll feel like givin' me a quarter to go to the Fair, 'cause she said I didn't have much fun like other boys, an' she knew I'd think a heap of goin' to that Fair where I could see the horses."

"You mean the County Fair, don't you? Are you fond of horses?"

Dan drew a long breath. "Oh, I jus' love 'em!"

he replied, pulling his hands from his pockets in his eagerness, and gesticulating rapidly.

"Here, here, my boy, put back those hands! you're forgetting that I'm painting you," cried Viola, in dismay.

Dan blushed and hastened to take his "pose" again, but the little tongue ran on all the same.

"You see, daddy was workin' on a place where there was, oh, *lots*, of horses, when I was a little feller, and I used to ride 'em when I was so little that dad had to hold me on, an' byme-by I got so I could ride faster'n any of the boys. I rec'lect that; but Daddy he went away to work somewhere else, an' I didn't see him much, an' most forgot how he looked, but I ain't never forgot *horses*, 'cause I rides 'em whenever I get a chance, an' I *stick on*, too, an' no horse can throw me if I get a fair start, an' the horse ain't up to mean tricks with a feller. I'd go most anywhere to see *horses*, but I don't like those fat women an' queer things they put up in pictures of the Fair on the fences. They're scary things, an' I wouldn't want to see 'em."

"You mean the side shows," said Viola. "Well, don't worry about the Fair, no doubt but you'll get there by hook or by crook, Dan; and now we've finished work for to-day. You may come to-morrow at the same hour. Do you like keeping so still?"

"Yes'm, when I remember the fifty cents for mammy. I like it, an' I'll come, sure, to-morrow."

He straightened up, stretched the little brown hands so long kept quiet in his pockets, and looked wistfully at the young lady, who was gathering her painting materials together.

Presently she turned and put a shining silver piece in the boy's hand. "Did you think I was going to forget about that, Dan?" she asked, smiling. "You looked just a minute ago as if you were quite troubled about something."

"No, no, indeed, Miss Vi'la," he replied. "I was only thinking how good you"—he paused, and then with a swift movement he lifted her hand, as he had done once before, and laid his lips softly with a kiss upon it.

"I love you!" he cried so earnestly that the girl

was surprised and touched almost to quick tears. She laid her hand on the child's curly head with a tender pressure, and then, as impulsively as he had acted, stooped and kissed the broad, pretty brow of the child who, she was more and more convinced, was by far the best and truest-hearted boy the village contained, for all the reputation he had so unjustly earned.

"Dan, I believe I love you too," she said, as the boy, speechless after her kiss, stood red-faced and with bent head before her.

"Oh, Miss Vi'la, Miss Vi'la! no one but mammy ever said that to me before! Oh, I am so *glad!*"

When Dan finally reached home he was surprised to find his mother in tears and gazing sadly at a note she held in her hand.

In an instant he was beside her, his arms about her neck, and his kisses on her cheek.

"What's wrong, mammy? Mammy, darlin', tell me quick! If any one's been hurtin' you, I'll — I'll — pound him to pieces," straightening his sturdy form and clinching his fist angrily.

The woman shook her head.

"'Tisn't that, Dan; 'tisn't hurtin' the body I mind; oh, no, lad, it's worse'n that, a sight worse'n that, Dan, dear," and she began to cry again. Dan waited in puzzled silence beside her, and presently she went on.

"Mrs. Howe just sent this note to me, an' she says that when you left the wash there yesterday you were alone in the room a minute, an' after you'd gone she missed a dollar bill that was layin' on the bureau, an' she s'poses you were tempted, an' — an' — oh, Dan, Dan, my boy, you never, *never* did such a thing as to steal that dollar? *Tell me* you wouldn't, boy!"

Dan's brown eyes glowed and he swallowed a big lump which suddenly sprang up into his throat.

His mother went on without waiting for reply:

"An' she says that she doesn't care for the *money*, but she can't give her washin' to a woman who hasn't brought her son up to know the sin of stealin'; oh, Dan, that's the very word, lad, an' me a-tryin' all your life to bring you up right an'

true. *Look* at me, child, I say! *Why* do you just stand there an' say no word to all I'm cryin' about?"

A few more big lumps to be swallowed, and then Dan found his voice.

"Mammy, I'd rather you hit me harder'n a piece of iron than to ask me—your own boy—if I *stole*! Why, I wouldn't have b'lieved you'd do that, mammy! I never saw any old bill, an' if I had I wouldn't 've touched it; so there, now! an' I never saw a *cent* 'cept what she gave me herself for the clothes. I'd—I'd like to just *hit* her, I would; an' I'd like to call her names like Bill calls *me*, for makin' my mammy cry, an' 'cusin' me of stealin'!"

His Indian blood was getting hot now, and he stamped his bare foot on the ground with more anger than he had exhibited in a long time. His mother wiped the tears from her tired eyes and smiled proudly on her son.

"You've got a spirit, laddie, an' I'm glad of it, but all the same it's a dreadful pity this thing's happened, for you see, Dan, we can't noway afford to lose the money Mrs. Howe's washin' brings in."

"An' to think we've got to lose it all 'long of a feller what *wasn't me*, stealin' that bill," cried Dan, excitedly. "But, never mind, no one shall 'cuse me of stealin' an' — an' not jus' know what I thinks of 'em for doin' it, I tell *you!*"

Dan wanted to cry, too, poor little boy, but the real, hot, honest indignation in his soul burned up the tears as soon as they started, and he pondered for a minute as to what he should do.

He came quickly to a decision, however and cramming his hat back upon his head so tightly that the already loosened and much-enduring crown gave more way, allowing a tuft of black hair, like a bunch of Indian war-feathers, to stick out through the large rent in the straw, he started from his mother's side like an arrow shot from its bow. His eyes were gleaming and his lips shut tightly together.

"Dan, where are you goin'?" called his mother.

"Now, mammy, don't you stop me. I ain't goin' to be stopped nohow, an' I'm in a big hurry."

"You won't go to do anything rash, Dan?"

"Ain't going to be no rasher'n other folks is,"

he said, defiantly, and was presently out of sight, while his mother read and re-read the cruel little note, and wondered how anybody with eyes to see her boy's honest little face *could* think him a thief.

"An' yet, oh, dear! there ain't any one in the village who *don't* think him a thief an' a liar, an' everything else that's dreadful an' wicked. Poor boy, he ain't no chance to show 'em what he really is, 'cause every one's against him, an' he's forever knocked about an' bein' blamed, the poor child, though he's no mean-spirited boy, after all, an' likes a bit of mischief as well as the next one, an' like as not he's wrong lots of times; but he ain't a thief, an' he don't mean to be bad."

All these thoughts were in Mrs. Carmen's mind as she returned to her wash-tub and scrubbed some of her indignation out of her fists so strongly that she nearly rubbed a hole in the bosom of the shirt she was washing.

"*Rat-tat-ta-tat.*" It was Mrs. Howe's kitchen. Bridget, the cook, was hurrying up the mid-day

luncheon when the knock at the door made her jump and spill some of the tea.

"Sure, it's that murdherin' grocer b'y! I'll fix him an' his noise!"

She went to the door with a reproof on her tongue, but it was not the grocer boy this time, only little Dan, who boldly asked for the mistress of the house.

"Is it Mis' Howe yer wantin'? Sure, thin, she'll not say ye, an' ye may as well be l'avin'. To come at this toime, when the lunch's gittin' ready! The impidunce av it all."

She would have closed the door on Dan, but he quickly stepped into the kitchen. He was, as we know, a very angry and excited little boy, and his usual timidity seemed to have flown quite out of him.

"Oh, dear, now!" said Bridget, "look at that! Are ye wantin' cold vittles? kase there's niver a cold wan in the house to-day, an the *hot* vittles isn't for the likes of *ye*, ye Injun spalpeen!"

"I wouldn't touch one of your vittles if you

wanted me to," cried Dan, red in the face and loud in voice. "I want to see the lady," he went on, "an' it's very 'portant bizziness, too, an' I *must* see her right away."

"Oh, no, indade, yer won't, kase I'm not goin' to throuble her about ye," replied Bridget, coolly.

Dan sat down in the nearest chair and put his hands into his pockets.

"All right, then," he said, "I ain't goin' out of here till I *does* see her, an' if *you* can wait, I reckon *I* can."

Bridget wasted no more words, but gathering up her energies she grabbed Dan by his shoulders and with great puffing and panting propelled him in the direction of the door.

But Dan, feeling that he had the right of the argument, and determined to make his effort to clear the reproach from his character, resisted with all his might and main, and pounded the cook on her face and back till she was forced to drop him and pause in the midst of the conflict for new strength.

"I jus' tell you I ain't goin' away till I see the

lady, an' you can't make me. I can scratch jus' like wild cats, I can, an' you better let me alone!"

"Bedad, thin, I belave ye," groaned Bridget, who hated boys, and considered "the little Injun" the worst of the yillage lot.

"You see, it's this way," continued Dan, straightening his shirt, which in the affray had become twisted about his little figure in a most disreputable way—"you see, it's this way: Mis' Howe she thinks I've been an' stole, an' I'm goin' to tell her. I didn't do no such thing, so now! Think I'll go 'way till I tell her that? no, *ma'am!* and down in the chair sat Dan again with his "resolution air," and his head held high as possible.

"The land!" cried Bridget, "ain't ye the spunky b'y, now? Thinks ye stole, does she? Arrah, thin, she's not alone, me b'y, in that thinkin'," and Bridget tossed her sandy-haired head in a very knowing way.

Dan flushed, and as if he were afraid to trust those belligerent little fists of his, he shoved them deep down within his pockets and contented himself

by swinging his feet to and fro against the rounds of the chair. Bridget glared at him a few seconds longer, then went up the stairs and reported to her mistress.

"Send the child up to me," said Mrs. Howe, thinking it a good opportunity to give Dan a lecture and teach him a lesson which might be wholesome for his future career.

She had not an unkind nature, and did not mean to be unjust, but in common with her neighbors generally she honestly believed Dan Carmen to be a bad, tricky boy, and though she cared nothing for the paltry one-dollar bill she felt indignant over the fact that it was not safe to leave the boy alone for even a moment in the room with anything which could be easily pocketed. There are very many really kind hearts in the world which, like Mrs. Howe's, are too ready to act upon impulse which takes the side of unconscious injustice, and yet would not *intentionally* wound another heart. It wasn't the *angry words* in her message to his mother which hurt little Dan, it was the *injustice*

of them all, and the hurt they did his dear mother made the biggest part of the wound for him.

As she waited his coming she thought:

"He deserves to be punished for his fault, and I shall be pretty severe with him."

She looked up sternly when the boy entered the room and stood before her.

"You want to see me, Dan, I understand," she said; "well, what excuse have you for your wicked theft?"

Dan lifted his black eyes to her face and kept them there steadily as he replied:

"I ain't got *any* 'scuse at all, ma'am. I haven't *been* thievin', an' I've come to tell you so, too. I ain't goin' to have my mammy cryin' her heart out over folkses 'cusin' *me* when I don't really deserve it. Why, ma'am, I wouldn't *steal* any more'n I'd *lie*! An'—an' I wouldn't look you right in the face as I'm a-doin' now if I'd stole even jus' a *pin* from you, would I? You ain't got no right to be down on my *mammy* jus' 'cause you—you s'picion *me*, an' you ain't got no right to s'picion *me*, neither."

Mrs. Howe looked down at the child whose earnest voice rang out so clearly, and a tiny girl, her only child, came shyly and curiously from the next room to stand at her mother's side, half afraid, and yet feeling sorry in her little heart because there was trouble of some kind going on before her.

The light from the window near which they were standing fell full upon Dan's face and showed the gleam of his dark eyes through tears he was too proud to shed, though it had been hard work for the little fellow to fight them off.

Mrs. Howe felt troubled. "Are you sure, Dan, as sure as you would be if you would remember that the dear Lord is always looking into our hearts and knows when we try to deceive, that you are telling me the truth? If you confess your fault, I will try to forget all about it, and your mother shall have my washing again."

Dan drew himself up, dashed the gathering tears away, and replied:

"I can't confess what I ain't done, 'cause that would *sure* be a big story, ma'am; an' — an' I don't



"WHY, MA'AM, I WOULDN'T STEAL ANY MORE'N I'D LIE!" — *Page 6*



think my mammy'll be willin', anyhow, to wash for you ever again; she won't forget how you 'cused her boy of stealin'. An' — I'm glad He — Him that lives in heaven, ma'am, *can* look into our hearts, 'cause He sees how *you* are all wrong, an' *I* am not one bit of a *thief*, even if I'm naughty in lots of other ways."

Dan's speech sounded saucy, but he didn't have such an idea in his curly head. He was only a very earnest boy, making the best effort he could to clear himself from an unjust suspicion, more for his dear mother's sake, indeed, than for his own, though it hurt him cruelly to be so misjudged.

The lady looked at him steadfastly. She began to feel ashamed of her suspicious as she looked into the honest dark eyes still misty with the indignant tears he had kept back so nobly, and read truth in the resolute little face upturned all this time to hers.

The more she looked at him the more ashamed of herself she became, and as it was the first time she had ever had a fair examination of Dan Car-

men's face and figure, and was able to judge from observation instead of hearsay, she was surprised to find herself becoming interested in the boy and getting ready to array herself on *his* side instead of standing on the side of his foes.

So, presently she said, holding out her hand to the little boy, meanwhile:

"Dan, I believe I have done you a wrong. I had no right, as you remind me, to judge you without proof of your fault, and though circumstances were against you, I did wrong to judge so hastily. Will you forgive me, my little boy?"

Now, indeed, the tears fell fast over the boy's brown cheeks, and he made no effort to hold them in check. But just as the sun will suddenly burst out from behind a sullen black cloud during a summer shower, so did Dan's face beam with the smile which was like the rainbow after the storm, and Mrs. Howe was surprised to discover what a very pretty boy he was, after all.

He put his small brown hand into the dainty white one held out to him and tried to speak, but

such a lump came popping into his throat that not a word would come.

He drew his arm across his eyes and kept swallowing and swallowing, until finally he got rid of the lump. Then he said:

"I ain't let myself cry before, 'cause I was too mad to do it, but mammy *she* cried, ma'am, oh, she cried real hard; for if anything goes wrong with *me* it hurts *her*, you see, 'cause I'm all she has, an' she loves me, though I'm naughty an' need a lickin' lots of times. But—I ain't a thief, ma'am, an' I don't lie. I somehow wasn't born with them kind of things in me no more'n my mammy was, 'n' I don't s'pose my dad was, either, 'cause I've always heard mammy say he was a good man."

Mrs. Howe smiled and laid her hand on the boy's head gently.

"Then we are friends again, Dan? You'll forget all my unkindness?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am! I never had no memory for mean things that's been done to me. I can't seem to have time to hold on to 'em."

"Wise little man! It's a pity some grown people were not like you there. Well, now run along and tell your mother how sorry I am for troubling her and you so much, and tell her she shall have all the work she wants from me, if she'll dry her eyes and forget my note. No doubt the bill was blown by the wind out of sight somewhere; at any rate, I *know* Dan Carmen didn't take it."

"Thank you very much, ma'am!" said the boy, and he turned towards the door.

But the little child came forward and held out a bunch of flowers which she had been tightly clutching in her baby hand all the while.

"Here dese f'owers for you, 'ittle boy. Dey is dood an' sweet for 'ittle boys," she lisped bashfully.

"I thank you so much, dear little missy," said Dan gratefully, taking the fragrant gift and holding it close to his face. "Mammy loves flowers, an' this is a prettier bunch than I can get for her out of the fields. She'll be so glad!"

"You're very fond of that mother of yours, aren't you, Dan?" remarked Mrs. Howe, kindly.

"Well, ma'am, she's all the mother I've got, an' if I didn't love her I'd be a wicked boy. A feller what doesn't think his mother the best an' most beautiful thing in all the world is what *I* call a *mean* feller, an' he ought to—to be sorry for himself, too!"

Mrs. Howe's new opinion of Dan was growing stronger with every moment, and she wondered how she could have been so hard upon him about a thing she actually had no proof of. "It has taught me a lessson," thought she.

Dan now turned his face homeward, bidding Mrs. Howe a grateful good-by, and dodging a few moments later, with considerable skill, the pail of water the still angry Bridget flung after him.

She put her hands on her hips, and stood at the kitchen door, shaking her head till the knot of red hair pinned loosely on the top shook back and forth in a comical way.

"Bedad, thin," she yelled, "there's a toime comin', me b'y, whin *I'll* tache ye how to run."

Dan looked back over his flying heels, and

snapped his fingers at her saucily, then turned the road just in time to escape a stone which had been sent from the hand of "Bill, the boss," as that young worthy came sauntering up the street, his hat on the side of his head and a cigarette in the corner of his mouth.

He looked the thorough bad boy that he was, and as much like a "rowdy" as boys usually look when they ornament their mouths with cigars, and try to look as "big" as they feel.

As the stone left his hand, Dan left the spot at which Bill had aimed, though the little boy had not seen his enemy, nor dreamed of the escape he had had, as his fleet feet sped over the distance and brought him nearer and nearer his mother in her lonely little home.

With the flowers in his hand he went up to her ere long, and smiled, and panted, and kissed her, all in a sort of breathless way which puzzled her greatly.

"Why, Dan, boy, how you have been runnin'!" she exclaimed; "but you don't look's if things had

been troublin' you much, with that smile an' them flowers."

Then, with an anxious tone and look, she added:

"Oh, Dan, where did you get them flowers? You *didn't* take them from somebody's garden? Tell me you didn't."

Dan smiled loftily.

"Guess you think I *am* a thievin' kind of feller after all, mammy! Well, if *you* thinks so, then of course Mis' Howe, who don't know me so well, ain't to blame if she calls me a thief!"

His mother opened her arms and gathered the boy in close to her breast.

"Oh, darlin', darlin', darlin'!" she cried, "I don't believe there's a bad streak about my boy! Whatever ailed me, but the fearful worriment of that note, I can't think, that I could think you guilty for a single moment, my own boy, with your father's own true eyes lookin' at me all the time!"

Dan gave her a regular "bear hug" for reply, and then, and not till then, did he remember the bright, shining silver-piece in his pocket, and all the happy

morning's experience he had expected to tell her as soon as he had left Miss Viola. How much had happened since then! It flushed his cheeks just to recall his feelings when finding poor mammy so tearful over Mrs. Howe's note. However, that thing was done with now, and at last Dan could sit down and tell his cheerful story, and show his big earnings for an hour or two of idleness.

Dan continued to pose for his dear Miss Vi'la for an hour or two each day, until at last the picture was finished, and there were two little "Dans" before her, as much alike as two peas in a pod.

"Oh, I wish mammy could only jus' see it!" cried the boy as he stood before the easel and gazed at the clever work of the young artist, and felt in his pocket the last of the five shining silver-pieces he had been paid for his posing.

"So she shall, my boy," was Viola's reply. "If she has time to spare this afternoon she can come to the house and ask for me, and I will certainly let her have a look at her painted boy."

Dan was delighted, and ran off to tell his mother of the treat in store for her.

Bennie was pleased because Miss Vi and Dan were pleased. His loyal little heart always reflected the happiness of those whom he liked, even though the thing itself did not specially concern him. He had become "great cronies" with Dan since their introduction by Miss Viola, and at his desire his mother had so far overcome her prejudice against the little half-breed that she had actually given her weekly wash to Mrs. Carmen, and expressed entire satisfaction at her work, too. So you see Dan's chance encounter with the young artist on that morning by the roadside had really opened a new era in his life, and he had been a happy boy ever since.

Well, that afternoon — the day of the "art exhibition," as Viola laughingly called it — the large canvas was placed on its easel on the broad piazza of the house where Viola lived, and quite a number of the neighbors had called to look at and admire it. Dan had never been the subject of so much attention before, and even now it was the *painted*

Dan who had the largest share of interest, while the real boy hung sheepishly behind Bennie, and blushed whenever he was told to "look up," and allow the likeness to be traced.

The "exhibition" was nearly over when Dan's mother arrived on the spot, a neat, clean woman, who carried herself well, yet humbly enough, and with a grateful glance at the young lady whom Dan had pointed out as Miss Vi'la, went close to the painting and looked earnestly upon it.

"It's my Dan, sure enough," she said, as Viola came forward to speak. "Oh, miss, you've been an angel to my son, an' if the dear Lord hears the child's prayers for you night an' morning, *you'll* never know a care or sorrow in this sorrowful world! He's a bonnie laddie to me, but — oh, well, never mind, he's a happier boy than he used to be, thanks to you, young lady, an' I know you *like* him well an' good, else you'd never have chosen the shabby little thing he is for a grand picture like this. It's a great compliment to my boy, an' I thank you, miss."

Viola, much touched, said a few kind words to the

woman, added *herself* to the list (a small list it was, too) of the washerwoman's patrons, and then the happy mother went silently away with her boy, and the picture was carried up to Viola's room to await transportation to New York and future exhibition at the Art Gallery.

That night Dan counted the money in the paste-board "bank," and there were the five half-dollars helping to increase weight and value at a great rate.

Little Miss Dolly Howe was playing about in the front yard before her home. It was such a lovely day, and the breezes were merry enough to blow the broad-brimmed shade hat from her pretty little head altogether too often for her comfort, so she left it off at last, and the sun and wind together busied themselves with tanning and sunburning the soft, sweet cheeks with might and main.

"Hello, missy, better put your hat on!" cried a voice which Dolly knew to belong to Dan. And, sure enough, he came along the road outside, the

gate and stopped to speak to her. Dan could now count his "*friends*" with considerable pride, for since the day when he had told Bennie "he hadn't a friend only mammy an' Miss Vi'la" his list had increased, and Dolly and her mother were within the circle. Mrs. Howe's injustice to the poor little boy had been atoned for in many little kindnesses to him and his mother, and the last cloud connected with that miserable dollar bill had vanished from Dan's heart and thoughts. He was beginning to feel quite like "somebody" amongst the village boys, in spite of his Indian blood: and if Bill and his circle of select followers were inclined to "tackle the Injun" at times, they were very careful to do that kind of thing far out of sight of the *main street* of the village, and *then* only when sure that the little boy was not prepared to defend himself. But we must return to Dolly.

"Oh, Dan, I finded somefin under my twee!"

Dan leaped over the gate—too much trouble to open it, I suppose—and took a bird's-nest from Dolly's hands.



"THEY'RE GOIN' TO HAVE WINGS SOME DAY." — Page 83.

"A dear little house all made of straw, Dolly, an' full of pretty white eggs. The birdies built it, an' they'll be so sorry when they come flyin' back to find no little nest."

"Tate out de stoneses. I want 'em to p'ay wiv."

"*They* ain't stones, *they's eggs!*" explained Dan, laughing. "They're goin' to have wings some day, an' then they won't keep so still in the nest."

Dolly peered over and looked with solemn eyes into the nest, and then Dan asked if he should put it back in the tree, explaining how the eggs would one day open their walls and let the wee birds come forth into the sunshine. He told it all in his boyish way, and made things quite clear to the little one's intelligence, so that from that moment she looked upon a bird's nest as a sacred thing to be most tenderly cared for and respected. And yet, only think, just a few short weeks ago Dan's own brown hand would have carelessly tossed a stone at a nest or bird, and, with no *intention* of cruelty, he would have made balls of the pretty eggs the mother-birds love so dearly. Ah, dear little Dan! and happy Miss

Viola, to have done so much towards making him a good boy!

Over the road ere long went Dan, whistling merrily so that mammy could hear and know that he was near at hand, — and out from the roadside bush sprang Bill, whom Dan had not seen for a long time.

“Now I’ve got you, little Injun!” he yelled, as he caught Dan by the arm and swung him about.

Dan felt his heart beating fast, but looked bravely up, and asked with a spice of courage he didn’t much feel, “Where’s the rest of you, Bill Barley?” meaning, of course, the four other boys of whom Bill was the leader, and expecting them also to pounce upon him presently.

“One’s enough for you to-day, I reckon,” said Bill, and putting out his foot he tripped Dan up quickly.

The little boy’s face flushed angrily; he thought he really *ought* to “fight back,” only, as mammy didn’t want him to, he would try other ways of freeing himself, if he could. So he *coaxed* Bill to let him up, and then he *threatened*; but the big boy only kept him down, and sat upon the strug-

gling little legs in the bargain. Then at last the Indian blood flew up to a boiling pitch, and Dan raised his hand to give a blow, when a larger and more brawny hand and arm reached over his prostrate body, and grasped Bill by the collar suddenly, lifting the astonished boy off his victim and high above the ground.

It was "big Fred," the gardener, of whom all bad boys were afraid, and Dan laughed for joy at the sight of him. Scampering to his feet, and shaking the dust from his clothes, he cried, "Give it to him, Fred!" and then sped as fast as his legs would carry him to his home and waiting mother.

Fred, meanwhile, was obeying Dan's command quite vigorously, and poor Bill, shaken and cuffed till he bawled like a baby, was finally released from the German's strong hand.

"Dare now, you goes home mit you'self, an' you no more pothers dat Dan poy, or I shages you vorse'n dis, mind I told you; you knows 'boud me? I am dat 'big Vred' you knows once alreatty."

Bill took Fred's advice meekly enough, and for

some time after that kept himself and his crew out of harm's way, at least so far as Dan was concerned.

As for Dan, he had been seized with a new idea as soon as he had settled down after his "scare" from Bill Barley, and was so full of it he seemed to walk upon air until things were quite ready for business. This was how it had come about. He went one day to take home the basket of clean clothes to Miss Viola, and waiting for her to make change for him, watched with a good deal of interest some ladies playing croquet near by. It chanced that the game was a popular one that season in the village, for all its rather old age, and Viola, seeing Dan's interest in the game then being played, said it was a pity the ground was not larger so that the balls would have more room to roll.

"They ought to be playin' in the big medder close by mammy's house," replied Dan; "there's lots of room there, an' once some people, havin' a picnic in the woods 'cross the road, put some wickets in the medder an' played a good while, an' had fun, I tell you. If I—*Oh!* Miss Vi'la! if I can earn money

enough to ask mammy to lend me some to buy that dollar set down to Jones' store, I jus' *know* I could fix things so's I'd make some money out of it, an' soon pay back mammy's dollar; couldn't I? *couldn't* I? say, Miss Vi'la, don't you see?" Miss Viola did see, and complimented Dan for his clever idea.

"Why, certainly," she said, "that would be a good business venture, Dan, for no doubt the young people, ladies and gentlemen, riding and driving past your house on the way to the beach, or to pass away time on a summer's day, would feel like stopping awhile to have a game of croquet, and you could—let me see—you could have a table near by and sell lemonade, so' much a glass, to those who might get thirsty, you know, and need refreshment. Why, Dan, little chap, I'll help you out in it myself."

Dan's eyes sparkled like big stars. He hopped right up and down, and clapped his hands, and *almost* obeyed a sudden impulse to hug Miss Viola as she stood there looking so dainty and sweet, and being so kind to him.

"I declare, I never thought I'd be such a *happy*

boy," he said at last. "I like bein' alive so much better'n I used to, do you know, Miss Vi'la?"

Well, so things were settled very soon. Miss Viola loaned the dollar to Dan (she wanted to give it outright, but wisely thought the boy would have more respect for himself and his "business" if he knew that he was simply borrowing capital to begin with, and must pay back as soon as he would be able). So she loaned him the price of the croquet set, and found an old but serviceable table somewhere, which she gave him free use of, and which was to be his lemonade-stand. All the next morning she was busy with the boy in the fair green field which was the "medder" he had told of. The brand-new yellow, blue, orange, and white balls—very round, roly balls—and short-handled mallets were arranged beside their box so as to have a sort of "careless elegance" appearance. The wickets were set in position, the stakes driven down, and the grass as low as the mowers, who had been there at work recently, had thought fit to have it. It made, in fact, a *tolerably* nice croquet-ground, and Dan

planned that "if he really made it *go*," he would be able to have the grass cut shorter some time, by doing an odd job for the loan of a lawn-mower. But, oh dear! after everything was completed, even to the placing of the old table under the spreading branches of a large tree near by, who should come along, shaking his fist, and crying out in a rough voice, but one of the men who had been mowing there a few days previous.

"Here, you, Dan Carmen, git out of here; don't you know you're trespassin'? Git 'long, or I'll make yer." Then turning to Viola, who stood amazed and indignant, he added, "Beg pardin, miss, but this ere medder is private prop'ty, so it are, an' I'm 'bleeged to ax yer to quit to once."

"To whom does this field belong?" questioned the girl, quietly, and laying her hand on Dan's arm.

"It's Mis' Howe's medder, miss, an' she don't 'low no people to make free with it."

Here Dan burst in excitedly, "Oh, I *saw* people once, my own self, playin' croquet here, an' nobody, drove 'em off neither, an' — an' I don't b'lieve Mrs.

Howe would *let* you do it, anyhow. Why, Miss Vîla, *do* you s'pose it's that Mrs. Howe mammy washes for?"

"It's Mis' Howe what's a-livin' in the village, an' she's mighty high an' partickler, an' if folkses has played anythin' here *I* didn't see 'em, or I'd driv 'em out quick, I tell yer."

"Well, you won't drive *us* out, my man. I am well acquainted in the village, and if you lay your finger on one piece of our croquet set, or the table here, until you are armed with written authority to do so from the owner, I'll have you arrested. Now, Dan, I'll remain here and you go to the Mrs. Howe whom you know—I think it must be *she*, for I haven't heard of another lady here by that name—and ask her about this thing, see if she is willing to let you use the field for this purpose. If she objects, we will find another place, if we can."

Dan ran like the wind down the road. It was quite a long stretch between the field in question and the entrance to the village itself, or I should say more correctly, the village centre. But Mrs.

Howe's was the nearest house, and Dan's feet made the dust fly, and the distance shorter than usual, it seemed, as he raced along on his very important errand, leaving Miss Viola calmly seated under the tree in the meadow, and the angry, ignorant farm-hand sitting astride the stone wall, baffled, yet stubborn.

There was a short but satisfactory meeting between Dan and Mrs. Howe. The lady was glad to oblige the honest little fellow who had once fought a battle for his own honor and mammy's sake so nobly before her. She gave a written consent that Dan, Carmen and all who were friendly to him should enter the field to use as they liked, in reason, of course; but it withheld that right from Bill Barley and the four boys always seen with him, and the man in charge was to keep strict watch that the last-mentioned five did not attempt to trespass.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted Dan, as once more he approached the meadow, holding up his paper, and shouting lustily enough.

Viola advanced to meet him and took the paper. She read it aloud, and then handed it to the man, who pulled his cap off, muttered something, and shambled sullenly away.

So there was joy again, and then Viola proceeded to make use of the little box of oil-colors she had brought with her, while Dan produced a clean piece of board which was meant for the little sign — “business sign” — he would have to use :

“Croquet played here — Four cents a game.

Lemonade fresh and cold — Three cents a glass ;
Two glasses, five cents.

Play a game? Have a glass?”

In good-sized letters neatly painted in white, picked out with black, this sign was prepared by Viola and fastened to the trunk of the tree nearest the roadside. Dan went out and viewed it from all directions, and Viola laughed at the “proprietor” air he unconsciously assumed.

“Now, I’ll lend you some money to buy your

lemons and the sugar with which to make your lemonade, and mammy will help you in that when she has an idle moment. You can squeeze enough in bottles to last as long as possible, and put the water in when your customers call for a drink. And I'll make you a *present* of an ice-cooler, Dan, so that you can have nice cold water to use. Your house is so near, you can replenish your jar any time."

"Miss Vi'la, some day, when you think my face is real clean, will you let me kiss you? I've been jus' crazy to for ever'n ever so long, an' I can't wait *much* longer."

Dan's voice was as eager as his eyes, and though there was a great streak of brown dust, browner than his skin a good deal, on his cheek, and his little hands were far from being clean in the least degree,— he had been working so, you see,— yet Viola gathered him just as he was, in her arms, and let him kiss her as he longed to, and kissed him back again, which was more than he had dared hope for.

Then, gathering the balls and mallets into the box, and hiding that and the table in a high, thick clump of bushes, the two friends went away, and left the meadow to its own silence until the morrow, when Dan would take his place as proprietor, and hope for custom.

"Custom" he *should* have, thought and plotted Viola Carew on her homeward way, and *she* would bring it about. And how do you think she managed? A very popular young lady was "Miss Vi'la" amongst her young neighbors (and the elderly ones, too, for that matter), and when she suggested anything her young friends were, as a rule, quite ready to agree with her.

So, what did she do that evening but flit into this and that house, and lay her suggestions and desires merrily before her friends, and with good-natured sympathy for little Dan and his "idea," they agreed to give him a fair start in the way of his new undertaking.

They promised to meet at the meadow at ten o'clock in the morning, and Viola laughed in antici-

pation of Dan's face when they should all arrive as his first "customers."

It was a beautiful day, as Dan had hoped it would be. Plenty of sunshine, and plenty of shade, also, beneath the trees, and especially the grand old oak under which the lemonade-table was to be placed. Dan was up bright and early, and finished his little duties about the small house, which helped his mother, and helped make a little man of him as well.

"Now, mammy, dear, sweet mammy, you an' I've got to keep our eyes open. I'm goin' to make this bizness pay, 'cause I owe the money to Miss Vi'la, you know, an' I'm 'shamed to think I had to borrow, 'stead of havin' earned it ahead."

"Oh, well, now, lad, never fear but you'll get along. I asked for you this mornin' the first thing, an' I s'pose you didn't forget to ask for yourself?"

Dan looked up brightly. "Oh, no, mammy dear. I did ask God to please help a little boy that was tryin' to help his mammy; an' so long's *He knows* I'm tryin' to be good, whether other folks do or

not, I ain't a bit 'fraid; so don't you fret, mammy."

Well, Mrs. Carmen made the lemonade, and filled two large jugs, and let Dan have two or three tumblers she had recently bought at the store, also a pail of water to rinse the glasses with. It was made nicely, just sweet enough, and cool enough; and after the table was ready, the boy set up the game, and took another survey (the twentieth one that morning already) of his gorgeous sign. By that time Viola arrived, and looked about to see that things were all right, and kept her secret bravely, while Dan asked anxiously:

"Don't you guess this is a nice kind of day to draw folks out to ride, ma'am? Don't you s'pose there'll likely be quite a plenty people 'long bymeby, it's *such* a fine day for drivin' an' doin' things, you see?"

"I shouldn't wonder, Dannie, if quite a number appeared. It *is* just the day for tempting some young people out for a walk or drive. Keep up your courage, little boy, and look up at the blue sky all you can. Don't search for clouds."

Presently a ringing shout from Dan announced the fact that "*something* was up."

"Oh! oh! Miss Vi'la, *please* look! there's a crowd of ladies an' a gentleman comin'. *Do* you think they'll notice my sign?"

"A crowd, Dan, where?" from Viola, pretending to be surprised, and purposely looking in the wrong direction.

"Not that way — *this* way, Miss Vi'la. See, see!"

"Oh, yes, four of them; no, six, counting two little people who are trotting along behind. Why, Dan, they are neighbors of mine, and if there isn't Bennie, and — yes, it *is* little Dolly Howe, she and Bennie are great friends lately, and I suppose Bennie coaxed her mother to let her come. Well, I rather fancy you will do some business this morning, Dan."

Dan clasped his hands in an agony of hope and fear. *Would* they look up and see that sign? Ah!

"Hello, ladies, read that!" in a few moments called the young gentleman who escorted the party, and who was brother to one of the girls, and

who, like Dan, thought Miss Viola the "loveliest girl in the world."

The girls looked up at the sign to which he was pointing, and affected great surprise.

"*Croquet!* the very thing of things!" cried one, not unmindful of the fact that Dan was all eyes and ears beside the style steps (by which the field was entered, without letting down bars).

"Certainly; let's have a game," replied another.

"I wonder if the proprietor is anywheres near?"

Dan stepped forward, twirling his cap nervously.

"Oh, yes'm, here I am," he said; "want a game? Four cents a game, miss, an' lemonade three cents a glass, two for five, miss."

They all laughed, and stepped over the style, greeting Viola as though her being there was such a surprise to them, while Dan, Dolly, and Bennie greeted each other with great delight.

Viola looked at Dan, and Dan looked at her, and then the boy, regardless of everything save his own wild delight and gratitude at this, to *him*, most unexpected streak of good fortune, rolled over and



"ONLY THREE CENTS A GLASS, YOUNG FELLER, TWO FOR FIVE."—Page 101.

over on the grass, and Bennie followed suit. Dolly *wanted* to, but contented herself by screaming with laughter; and so there seemed to be a good time all around.

Then the three ladies and the gentleman played several good games of croquet, and while resting afterwards indulged in lemonade and praised it highly, while Dan grinned for very joy.

Bennie, feeling as important as anybody, put his small fingers into a small side-pocket, and loftily called for his glass of lemonade also.

"Only three cents a glass, young feller, two for five," Dan said, with his best proprietor air.

And Bennie ordered two, with a sublime indifference to the expense.

"There now, Dolly, I'll treat *you*," he said; and Dolly answered politely, "I is glad, 'tause I forfeited to bwing any money, an' I love drinks lite that."

"You darlin' thing," cried Dan, pouring her a big glass full, and refusing to take the five cents from Bennie. "You shall have all you want. Ain't

this your own mammy's own medder, I'd jus' like to know? an' ain't she let me have it all free? I guess I *ain't* goin' to be paid for *your* drinks of lemonade; I ain't that kind of a Dan!"

Dolly didn't quite comprehend all Dan's speech, but she understood well enough that he was being good to her, and drank her lemonade with all the complacency of a regular little "deadhead" (as you have heard it called, no doubt).

Well, after the players had gone, and the meadow was deserted by the busy flying feet of the children, the grasshoppers and other insects ventured to take undisturbed possession again, and Dan ran home to count his profits.

"You see it's four cents a game, an' that's a penny apiece for 'em; 'an if only two plays, that's *two* cents apiece for 'em. An' let's see, they played six games, mammy, that's — that's — "

"Now *add* it, if you can't remember the way you studied your mult'plication t'other night," said his mother. "You must try to be a smart scholar,

Dan, lad, though *I* can't teach you much, more's the pity."

So Dan put six figure 4's on his slate and added them up, and said:

"Yes, there's twenty-four cents for the games, an' — why, *I* know how to say it the other way — six times four's twenty-four; *that's mulpercation*, isn't it?" Then he went on, after a kiss from mammy, — "Well, then they had lemonade, an', mammy, they said it was awful good, I tell you! Well, let's see: *drinks*, three cents a glass, an' the gentleman, *he* paid for 'em, you see, and they all drank twice, an' — oh, wait — it ain't only *five* cents for two glasses at a time, so — what does that make, mammy?" Mammy wisely kept the money in her hand, preferring that Dan should learn as well as play, and he could not fall back on the pennies or nickels to help his memory.

"Well, count it in your mind, or add it, lad, and answer your own question."

So Dan succeeded in convincing himself that five cents four times made twenty cents to add to the

game money, and then his mother laid the whole before him, and laughed with him over his first day's good fortune; and then he dropped the *forty-four* cents in the "bank," and hugged his mother, because he was happy.

"You won't often be so fortunate as you've been to-day, dear," she said, "and you must not grow impatient, boy, if you don't go smooth-like all the time. There's ups an' downs in business, an' we've got to be prepared for both things. Don't be forgettin' you owe Miss V'la some money."

"Ah, no, indeed! but she said I mustn't think of that, an' not speak of it to her for two weeks, an' then we'd talk a little; she's *so* good, mammy!"

I will not take time to go fully into the history of the croquet game venture, but will say that, as days went on, people seemed to take more interest in Dan, and the little fellow was more fortunate in getting odd jobs to do, and the "medder" up by his house became quite a popular resort for the young people, who enjoyed plenty of room for their

game, and considered a penny apiece for a game not at all extravagant. When "custom" was scarce, as on some days, Viola was pretty sure to happen along and feel like playing a game with Dan, and always insisted upon paying the price, and presenting Dan with his share of the price as well, for she laughingly said, "The rules are strict, and yet it would look queer for a proprietor to be paying *himself* for his game, you see."

Oh, she was a kind friend, indeed, to Dan, and when at last the dollar was paid back to her by the proud, happy boy, fairly earned, as was also the "lemon money," she put it in an envelope with a note to Mrs. Carmen, and Dan took it from the post-office soon after, carrying that unheard-of thing—"a letter for mammy"—home with great curiosity and speed. You may guess; it ought not to be necessary for me to tell you what the note said about the money it enclosed. But Dan and mammy loved Viola better than ever that day.

Of course, Bill Barley and "those boys of his" were inclined to annoy Dan, and made several at-

tempts to steal the wickets he left always in position in the field (so as to save mistakes in setting them again), and to find the box of balls and mallets, and the table, which were always hidden overnight in the bushes. But after they had been caught one night, or *nearly* caught, I should say, by the farmer in charge of the field for Mrs. Howe, a cross, ugly mastiff was left as watchman at night, and no boy dared risk getting over the fence. So Dan was secured from further annoyance of that sort.

So the summer days went on and on. Dan's little heart expanded more and more, and the village people, taking a new interest in him,—of course, owing to the influence of his stanch friend, Miss Viola,—were quite surprised at themselves for ever having imagined the poor little fellow to have been the chief “bad boy” of the place. Why, if they had only had a fair chance to *look* at him, long before, to have really looked into those honest eyes of his, and watched the expression of that little

brown face, as they often watched it now, surely no person of sense could possibly have believed all the miserable notions which had somehow — without any of Dan's fault, we who are behind the scenes have known all along — become circulated about the little "half-breed." Well, all that was over. Dan had no need to shamble along uneasily, keeping his eyes open for Bill Barley or some other misfortune, and he didn't expect now-a-days to hear surly threats or meet contemptuous glances. Thanks to the dear young lady who had brought all this happy change about, Dan Carmen could hold up his little figure, and feel that his *shrinking* days were over.

The time of the County Fair was approaching, and the village boys were getting excited. Dan was no longer "proprietor" of the croquet-ground. That game had lost its popularity at last, and so, after some weeks of quite successful business profits, Dan pulled up his wickets, packed his set in its box, and stowed it away at home with the old table, thanked Mrs. Howe for her kindness in letting him have the field so long, and then held himself "open for en-

gements” of any kind that might turn up. His mother had wished to keep his little earnings for him apart from her own purse, but Dan laughed at her. “What do you s’pose I earned it for, mammy, darlin’, if it wasn’t to help *you*?” he asked, throwing his arms about her neck with one of his energetic hugs.

However, she made him take out the Fair admission money, knowing how he longed to go, and yet feeling that he wouldn’t touch a cent of it unless he was sure there was sufficient behind it in the little pasteboard box. So Dan would get to the Fair after all, and he was a very light-hearted boy when he told Miss Viola all about it, and received from her — a great surprise to him, too — a bright half-dollar with which to buy something for his mother and himself.

Dan had been working for a farmer for a day or two. The very same old fellow, by the way, over whom he and Miss Viola had triumphed in regard to Mrs. Howe’s meadow, you remember. The man had since then grown into a liking for the boy.

One afternoon, at a time when the Fair grounds were being arranged, and tents being put up for various purposes, Dan and the farmer's hired chore-boy were in the field together helping with the hay. Dan whistled merrily about his work, for not only was he happy, but he seemed to *overflow* with a sort of new delight in being alive, and able to enjoy all the gladnesses which had come to him in various ways, and he wished everybody in the world could be as happy as he was now, with his new friends, and his "lots of jobs," and his anticipations about the Fair.

Jake wasn't whistling; oh, no! (Jake was the chore-boy.) He was unusually doleful. I say 'unusually,' because Jake was always rather doleful and "down in the mouth," as the boys say. He was an orphan, and a stranger — as Dan had been once — in the village. He had no especial friend or crony, and the old farmer and his busy wife were not over-abundant with kind words and attentions; and so, when you think of it, poor Jake was really worse off than Dan, who had at least the com-

fort of his dear *mother's* love, for all his hard luck about the village. Besides, Dan was no longer a "stranger" there, and Jake had only been three weeks in the place. He liked it better than the orphan asylum, to be sure, but he was very lonely and unhappy most of the time, and Dan began to notice it soon after he started in on his work for the farmer. On this afternoon, as I say, Jake was more than ever sad, and was so stupid about his work that the farmer yelled at him crossly.

"Can't ye move like a *live* critter?" he cried. "Come, stir those stumps of yours, an' creep as lively as ye kin!" Jake tossed the hay sullenly, and made no reply.

"What ails you, Jake, anyway?" asked Dan, his own sturdy little arms raking fast and far as he spoke.

"Nothin' ails me 'cept bein' as I be," answered Jake, "an' I wish I was diff'runt, I do."

Dan didn't fully understand Jake's meaning, but he could see well enough that here was a boy who was feeling as *he* used to feel before Miss Viola

enlisted her kind heart upon his side of affairs in general, and he pitied Jake with all his heart.

"Cheer up, Jake," said he, sympathetically, "there ain't any use in bein' cross, you see, an' if you don't move faster the old man'll lick you. I see it in his eye."

Dan's *intention* was more cheerful than his words, but Jake somehow didn't seem comforted, and so the two boys worked together, one happy, the other unhappy, until the hay-cart moved away to empty itself of its fragrant freight and return to load up again. Dan threw his hat down, and bared his curly brown head to the cooling afternoon breezes, and straightened his tired little back, and whistled again.

Presently he cried out gayly:

"Oh, Jake, I can see the Fair buildin's an' the tents! Jus' look! Ho! won't it be fun!"

"I don't want to see 'em, an' I ain't goin' to," replied Jake, turning his back and sitting down gloomily.

"Why, don't you like to see 'em so far off, an'

kind of wonder how they'll look when you get inside 'em?"

"*I* ain't goin' to be inside 'em," sighed Jake; "how'd you s'pose *I'm* goin' to go to that ere Fair?"

Dan was silent. He had forgotten for the moment that only a little while ago *he* would have been as hopeless about the Fair business as poor Jake now was.

His little heart grew sad and sorry for Jake in a moment. He felt as if he would like to help Jake have a good time, but he didn't see how he could. He would like to have said, "Here, Jake, you can have half of my money when Farmer Jones pays me to-night, an'—" But no, he couldn't say that, for it was mammy's money, not his, he was working for. He had no right to give any of it away. He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out his handkerchief to mop the little heated face, all tanned browner than ever, and sunburned in the bargain right on the tip of the small pug-nose. With the handkerchief came out a half-dollar. It



"I CAN SEE THE FAIR BUILDIN'S AN' THE TENTS!" — Page 111.

was the silver-piece Miss Viola had given him just a day or two before, and which he had carried around with him as a sort of personal possession and talisman for good fortune — and *the Fair*. As Dan picked it up from the grass, a thought popped into his head. He wished at the moment that it *had not*, for when thoughts did come to him in that sort of a way they generally stayed long enough to compel him to do some hard thinking upon all-around subjects. Just now he didn't want to hold this special thought at all. It fretted him considerably, and all the more because he knew it was being very selfish *not* to give it attention. He went off by himself and sat down, but not until he had heard Jake mutter sadly, "*I'd* like to have a good time same's other fellers. I ain't *never* had a good time's I kin remember! Folks as does have 'em needn't talk to *me* 'bout bein' cheerful."

His back was towards Dan all the while he spoke, and he had not seen the half-dollar which Dan now held in his hand, hesitating between two kinds of thoughts and desires.

A red flush, which had no connection with sunburn, crept up to his brows and lost itself in the mass of damp, tangled curls which were matted on Dan's head and forehead. He looked at Jake's drooping back and shoulders, then at the money, then in the direction of the Fair grounds. Then he looked at Jake again very wistfully, and at last he looked up at the beautiful summer sky, so broad and blue above the landscape.

Something he saw there must have helped him to some decision, for he sprang to his feet, turned his back upon the Fair grounds, and went over to Jake.

"Jake, Ja-ke," he said, swallowing something very hard, and trying to speak steadily. "You can cheer up truly, 'cause you're goin'—goin' to have a boss time, I can tell you. See! this was a present to me, an' I can do what I like with it, 'cause it ain't mammy's money, you see, an' it ain't *earnt* money either, else it *would* be hers. But it's all my own, an'—see here, Jake, I've had lots of good times lately, since I knew a dear young lady who was heaps an' heaps good to me, an' now I'm goin'

to let *you* see how nice it feels to have a good time too." He dropped the coin into the hand of the astounded Jake, and went on, "Now you can go to the—the Fair, you know, Jake, an' have as good time as the rest of—the fellers."

Jake's face was like a sunbeam. "Yer don't mean it, Dan, now, do yer?"

"Yes, *sir*, I do, honest and true! Hello, there's the cart back. Now, fly 'round, do, Jake, 'cause you ought to feel better now, you see."

"Don't I, though!" cried Jake, grinning like a new boy, and he sprang with a will to his feet, and actually whistled (though Dan did not this time) as he raked the hay into a pile for the pitchfork, and caused the old farmer to look at him with pleased surprise. Later on, when work was over, Jake and Dan said good-by to each other, and Jake followed the cart and men towards the farm, while Dan, feeling still rather lumpy about the throat, walked slowly home to deposit his day's profits of thirty cents—all the farmer paid "*a boy*"—in the pasteboard box. He made up his mind to say not

a word to his mother about the change in his plans. It would trouble her to have him disappointed, and he would find some good reason for staying at home when the time came, no doubt. But poor little Dan, he didn't whistle much during that walk home, and the smile he put on, when at last his mother saw him, was not very deep down in his heart, after all, though *she* didn't know it.

The Fair day drew near, and finally there was but one day before the opening. Dan, taking home a basket of clean clothes for one of his mother's patronesses, met Viola Carew at a turn of the road.

She greeted him with more than usual warmth—though she was always so cordial—Dan fancied, and he pulled his cap off with instinctive gallantry as he paused before her.

“You will go bright and early to the Fair, Dan, to-morrow, I suppose?” she asked, smiling, and watching the little brown face closely.

The boy cast down his eyes and shifted from one foot to the other.

"I'd *like* to, ma'am," he finally said, feeling that he was giving at least a *true* answer, if not just what she might imagine his meaning to be.

"There'll be nothing to hinder, will there, Dan?" she asked again; and Dan wondered why she asked such searching questions.

"You know I gave you that half-dollar on purpose for the Fair, Dan, my boy. I hope you haven't lost it."

Dan looked up bravely. "Oh, no, Miss Vi'la, I haven't lost it; no, indeed!"

"Well, then, I shall look for you the first thing," she said; "and perhaps you'll wait for me at the entrance gate?"

Poor little Dan, he felt himself in a corner, and feared to explain, lest his partial friend should reprove him for what he had done; and, moreover, he didn't like to tell of his good deed half as much as he would have been willing to confess to a fault. She stood there awaiting his answer, and he kept digging a little bare heel into the dust, and twirling the handle of his cart in great confusion of mind. At last she said, severely

"Dan, where is that money? I believe you've lost it, after all. How you act! Why don't you look up at me, and be honest in speech?"

"Oh, Miss Vi'la, I ain't lost it at all. Sometime I'll tell you what happened to it, but I don't think I feel like goin' to the—I mean I don't know as mammy can spare me to-morrow, ma'am, an' if *you'll* tell me 'bout the horses afterwards, it'll be most as good as seein' 'em myself."

Viola sat down on a big stone at the roadside and pulled the boy down beside her. "Now, Dan," she said, "I *know* all about that money. I was waiting at the post-office, and Jake came in. I thought his face looked brighter than I had seen it before,—though, to be sure, I've only seen the boy two or three times, and have never spoken to him at all; but he always looks heavy and dull, I think; well, he came in quite cheerfully, and as he stood near me I spoke to him. He talked freely enough about himself, and finally told me that he was going to the Fair "on a ticket Injun Dan had giv him." From what he said I concluded that you had made him willing

to accept your money by pretending you couldn't go, or didn't want to, or some other well-meant but naughty story concocted to hide your real intention. Now, Dan, look at me!"

Dan lifted a very red face to her gaze.

"You *do* want to go to that Fair, and you are a disappointed boy because you can't go; but you would rather let that poor boy have the good time than have it yourself. Dan, you are—" with a sudden movement she put her arms around little Dan and hugged him as she continued, "You are a dear, good child, and you *shall* go to that Fair, or I won't go myself. I suppose I ought to let the *virtue* of your good deed reward you, but I fear that wouldn't let you see the horses, and, besides, I would like to make the reward a little extra for this occasion."

She put two bright twenty-five cent pieces into the hand of the blushing, astonished little boy, and then gave him another hug, while he looked at her through two large, shining tears which gratitude sent straight up from his heart, and said earnestly:

"Miss Vi'la, I do b'lieve you are really a *angel*, an' I don't see how the dear God can spare you out of the sky, I don't. But so long's you're here, I jus' do hope an' pray He'll keep on sparin' you, so I do."

What a perfect day dawned for the opening of the Fair at last! How the sunbeams rioted and danced and beamed everywhere, and how the breezes fragranced themselves with the sweetest of odors as they flew hither and thither over fields and through lanes, now frolicking high up amongst the tree-tops, and now rustling through the grasses at the roadsides, and setting the low bushes to nodding! All the fragrance of the past summer seemed to have come back on purpose to grace and make perfect this one fall day, when the Fair grounds were thrown open to the crowds from every direction.

Dan, cleanly dressed, and kissing his busy mother good-by, said:

"I don't know how it is, mammy, but it sorter feels 's if somethin' good was a-goin' to happen to

us to-day. I kind of feel it in the air, an' somehow it seems 's if I'm *dreadful* happy to-day! I'd be happier, oh, a lot happier, if *you'd* go 'long too, dear mammy, an' I'd work real hard to make up the money for you. I *wish* you'd go 'stead of me; I've been coaxin' you to, so long, an' Miss V'ila she'd jes' 's soon *you* had the money as for me to use it."

Oh, nonsense, Dan!" replied his mother, holding his curly head upon her breast with gratitude in her heart for such a dear little son. "Nonsense, lad, you know I wouldn't give a fig to go; I've got better work on hand than that; off with you, now, and do take care of yourself, darlin'."

Well, everybody knows what a county fair is, and it would be only waste of time and space to attempt to tell of all the sights connected with this especial exhibition. The usual display of huge vegetables greeted the eyes of the crowd, and the usual array of fruit, "not to be handled," made mouths water. All kinds of things of all kinds of styles were there for inspection, from the daintiest of

needlework, to the fattest of *white pigs*. The "side-shows," where fat women and thin men, short and long, broad and narrow, handsome and homely, straight and crooked, were congregated, had their usual share of patronage; but *Dan* was not found amongst them. The man who whitened the blackest of teeth (and kept silent as to the horrible results which would follow later on) was there, of course, holding forth to the gaping few who believed all he said. The candy and peanut stands were there; the "soda fountains," also the "refreshment tent," and, oh, *all* the accompaniments of every county fair ever held anywhere on the face of the globe were there in full force, and Dan grew bewildered with the sights and sounds. He had met Miss Viola at the entrance gate, and gone the rounds with her for a while, but some friends had finally taken her off with them, and Dan was now wandering about by himself. He had encountered Jake once or twice, but the crowd had pulled them apart, and at last Dan found himself where he most cared to be—amongst the horses, beautiful animals, from the little

ponies up to the noble stallions who stood so far above the boy's head.

"Oh, *my!* wouldn't I like to be a man an' own a horse!" thought Dan. He envied the jockeys who were to ride in the race soon to come off. How he did wish that *he* could be a real jockey, and wear the jockey uniform and strut about as they did.

There was a sale of horses going on near him, and Dan drew nearer the gentleman who was examining a noble horse offered by the horse dealer for what seemed to Dan a whole mine full of money, but which the dealer declared to be "a mere song for such a fine specimen of horse-flesh." The gentleman who wanted to buy had a kind, pleasant face, and seemed inclined to make the purchase.

As Dan approached he was saying to the dealer, "I like the looks of this animal very much, and think I shall take him, but will be better satisfied after I have seen him ridden. I would ride him myself, but, unfortunately, I have been a victim of rheumatism recently, and do not feel like this kind of exercise just now."

"All right, sir," replied the man. "I'll find a boy about here to ride him for ye. It's *my* opinion this ere critter'll surprise ye some fine day. He ain't never been raced, but he kin go as well as the next horse, an' only needs a bit of trainin,' sir, to make hisself famous."

Dan had heard enough to make his eyes glisten and his hair to stand on end with excitement. Should he lose such a chance for one real, good ride on horseback, when he had longed for such a pleasure so many times; not he! In an instant he stepped before the men. "Oh, sir, *please*, mister, *please let me* ride for you! I can do it, oh, I *can*, if you'd only jus' give me a try, sir."

He turned from the gentleman to the dealer rapidly as he spoke, addressing them both, and fairly wriggling with anxiety lest he should be driven off.

The gentleman noted the eager eyes and honest little face, and smiled at Dan. The dealer glanced only carelessly at the boy, and said, "A pretty chap *you* are to ride this animal! a mite like you! Why, this ere hoss'd fling ye before ye could say Jack



"OH, PLEASE, MISTER, LET ME RIDE HIM FOR YOU!" — *Page 126.*

Robinson. Oh, I'll find a boy in a minit, sir," turning to the would-be purchaser.

But Dan pressed forward and caught the bridle in his hand, saying eagerly again, "Only jus' let me have the *try*, sir, please. I *can* ride him. I've ridden before when I was littler'n I am now, an' I know how to stick on, 'deed I do, mister. *Please* try me jus' once."

"Hold on, Brown!" said the gentleman as the dealer took Dan's hand from the bridle. "There's a sort of pluck about this little chap, and I've a notion to try him. I only want to see the pace of the horse, anyway, and I guess he can show that. At any rate, I'll give him the pleasure of a 'try.'"

Dan laughed happily, and sprang lightly to the horse's back, where he sat erect as a little prince, despite his shabby attire.

"Well, if he's throwed an' kilt outright," said the dealer, shrugging his shoulders, "'twon't be none of *my* fault, mind that, now."

"I ain't a-goin' to be flung," cried Dan, gathering

up the reins, and feeling so happy he didn't know whether to sing, laugh, or cry. "Now, then, sir," to the gentleman, "shall I trot him or walk him, or what? Won't you let me run him, sir?"

"Go ahead, boy, the race-track is clear, and you'll have a good chance to see what you can do."

It happened just at that time that the majority of the crowd had surged over in another direction, and as the races were not to come off for an hour or more, that part of the grounds was comparatively empty, save for a few stragglers and jockeys about the stables. So Dan rode over to the track and started on an easy trot around the course, while the dealer, the gentleman who wanted to buy, and a few of the loungers about kept their eyes upon him critically. "He sits well," "He rides well," "*He* knows what he's about," "That's a plucky little chap," and other remarks similar, were heard by the gentleman as he watched Dan ride, and he quite agreed with each speaker. But the dealer, not ready to yield his opinion, said, "Well, he ain't really rid fast enough to scare him yet. If the hoss made any

speed the boy'd be throwed and kilt, sure as a gun."

When Dan came around to the starting-place again, all flushed with pleasure and excitement, he asked if he might have a "run" the next time.

"Ride as you please, my lad," said the gentleman, "only don't get a tumble." So Dan started off on a run, and the horse showed off so finely, and carried himself so well, that the question of the sale was about a settled thing. Just at that moment one of the jockeys rode into the ring, and began giving his horse a chance to limber up. Seeing little Dan's small figure ahead of him, he cried out jestingly, "Get out of the way, you mite! Hi, there! get out of the way, else you'll be blown over when I pass you by the wind of my speed!"

Dan turned his head, and his black eyes gleamed.

"Look out for *yourself*," he replied, saucily. "Catch me if you can, an' *then* blow me off! How's that?"

"Ha, ha! that's your talk, eh?" shouted the jockey, and he touched his horse into a gallop.

"Now's my time for fun," thought Dan. "I ain't had such a good time for I don't know when, an' 'tain't likely I'll ever get the chance again. Go 'long, now! ssst! go on, my fine feller of a horse, g'long!" He struck his little heels into the horse's sides and spurted on, still in advance of the jockey. Faster and faster, still faster flew the horses around the course, and the cheers of the lookers-on soon drew other eyes to the scene, and the cheers grew louder. The gentleman for whom Dan was riding grew excited and cheered lustily himself, while the astonished dealer rubbed his hands together and said, "I told ye the critter could go, only give him the chance. Lor! how the boy does keep up his pluck!" If it was fun for Dan, who didn't know the meaning of the word "fear" in connection with a horse, it was far from being fun for the boy behind him, who was growing angry very fast at the idea of being beaten in this impromptu style by a boy he didn't know, a "mere snip of a boy," who dared to keep ahead of himself, "a real jockey."

But there was no help for it. The horse Dan

rode, though never known as a "racer," and offered for sale by the dealer at a price the man then imagined to be "fair," but according to present appearances "*not half* his worth," was proving himself to be a very fine animal indeed, and there was no longer a doubt in the gentleman's mind concerning his purchase. Still on came the riders, Dan still ahead, bending to his work, and making his light weight still less of a burden to the flying horse. Now they were nearing the starting-place, and the jockey, fancying he could get an advantage over Dan by disconcerting him, threw his cap so that it might fall beside and startle both horse and rider. Foolish idea! it only turned the interest of all the on-lookers in Dan's favor, while, as the cap fell far behind Dan's tracks, the shouts "Mean!" "Shame!" reached plainly the angry jockey's ears. Nearer and nearer now, and finally Dan looked up to see the crowd increasing, and the goal close by. It was close work, but just by a head's length little Dan's horse came in first, and the cry of "Bravo!" went up merrily from every throat there.

Dan slipped from the saddle and once more stood upon his own sturdy little legs, panting a good deal, and a good deal flushed, as much so, at least, as his brown skin would permit to show.

He patted the big horse, and then turned to the gentleman who had just completed his purchase and handed his check to the dealer.

"I'm ever so much 'bliged to you, sir," he said. "I've had lots of fun, an' that's a good horse, sir. I ain't had such a nice ride since I was a little fellow, an' I don't s'pose I ever shall again. I'm so glad you let *me* ride him, sir."

"I shall want to speak to you, my lad, in a minute, just wait here a few seconds," was the reply, and then the dealer came up, patted Dan's head, and remarked, "It was lucky he [Dan] hadn't been throwed and kilt after all."

Dan received a good many compliments from the people about him, and felt quite confused and embarrassed at being the centre of attraction so unexpectedly, though he couldn't feel that he had done anything very clever in merely racing a horse.

"I wasn't goin' to let him" — pointing his thumb backward at the defeated jockey — "*sass* me, an' then get ahead of me too," he explained, "an' so I jus' let the horse go faster 'n *his* did, that's all."

But that *wasn't* "all" for little Dan. The gentleman whose horse he had ridden was too much interested in the boy to bid him good-by with only some coins for his service. He had a long talk with Dan, and learned the boy's history as we have known it, and discovered, moreover, that Miss Viola Carew was the daughter of an old-time business friend of his, and, of course, learned from her still more of Dan's character than he could ever have done from the boy himself. So it came to pass that after a day or two the gentleman and Miss Carew went together to see Mrs. Carmen and talk with her. It was a very pleasant kind of talk, although it made Mrs. Carmen cry a little, and caused Dan to draw his brown hands several times across his eyes. But the tears were, after all, glad

ones, and there were two very, very happy hearts left behind in the little house, when, by and by, Miss Viola and her father's old friend walked down the lane and turned towards the village centre.

And what do you think the "talk" was all about? If you had been in front of the school-house one morning, just a week after this, you would have found out the reason of those happy tears of Dan's and his mother's, for the children were gathered about one of their number, listening with all their ears to the news he was relating.

"I know all about it, you see," the boy said, feeling very important because he was the centre of all attention from his mates. "I know all about it, because Dan told me himself. He's going to New York to live in that man's big house, wear a green coat with brass buttons, and sit beside the coachman when the folks go driving, and tend the door when he's in the house, and—and he's going to have real fun, and the gentleman's so kind to him, too, and—let me see, oh, his mother, *she's* going to New York too, but *she's* going to live at Miss Vily

Crew's house and be head servant, Dan says. You see, Miss Vily Crew, she lives in a big house, and there's lots of servants, and she's good and kind to 'em all, and they've lived with her since she was little, and now one of 'em's gone away, and so she's taking Dan's mammy to fill the place. I tell you, Dan's going to be real happy."

Some of the children were glad for Dan, and others were indifferent, but some were quite jealous that he should be so bettered in his fortunes.

"H'm," said one, sneeringly, "that little Injun! *He* ain't worth such a fuss. Such a little sneak, afraid to stay in school 'cause he got licked."

"And so Dan Carmen is getting a lift at last," said the teacher when presently he, too, heard the news. "Well, maybe the boy deserved it. I've never thought he was half as bad as he was supposed to be. I wonder how the village will get along without its little scapegrace."

And honest "big Fred," the gardener, hearing that remark, replied gravely,

"Das village ain't lose its scvapegvace. *Bill* vas

still going de blace around, an' vhere *he* vill be, dere also vill be a scvapegvace, an' more mit him. Dot Dan-boy ees a goot lad to peobles vat vise enough to know gold vrom brass."

And Fred was quite right, I think, don't you?

So, now we can say good-by to little Dan, and be glad with him for all the good fortune he has started upon. A brave, honest little boy; a loyal, loving, helpful little son; a grateful, appreciative little fellow; and well worth all that Miss Viola had done for him! That should be our honest opinion of Dan, and having all those qualities, no one need doubt but he will make a wise, good man. So I will write *finis* to this, my story for "us boys," and await the verdict.

THE END.

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